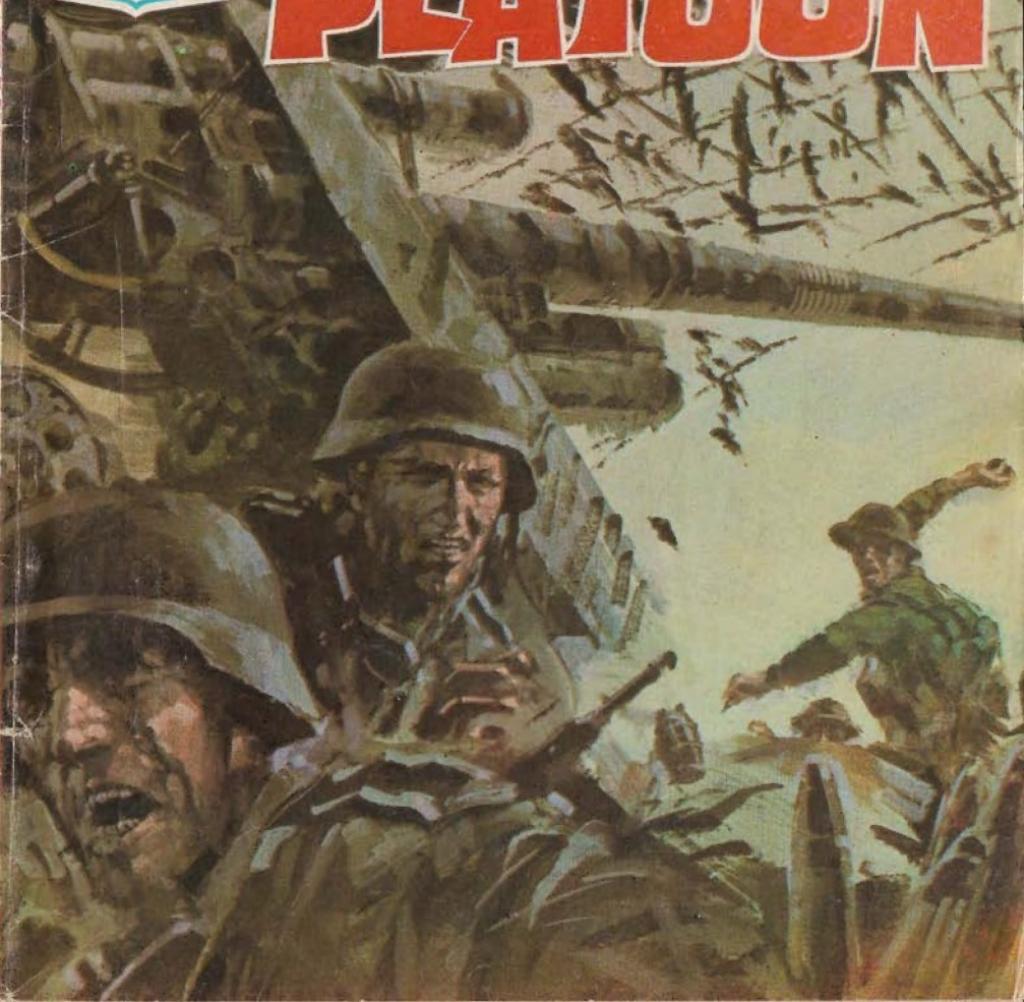


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# SEVEN PLATOON



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# SEVEN PLATOON

THEY HAD A REPUTATION AS THE ROUGHEST AND TOUGHEST UNIT IN THE COMPANY. THEY HAD EARNED IT THE HARD WAY AND IT WAS KEPT ALIVE BY THOSE WHO SURVIVED THE HARD-FOUGHT BATTLES AGAINST A STRONG AND POWERFUL ENEMY...

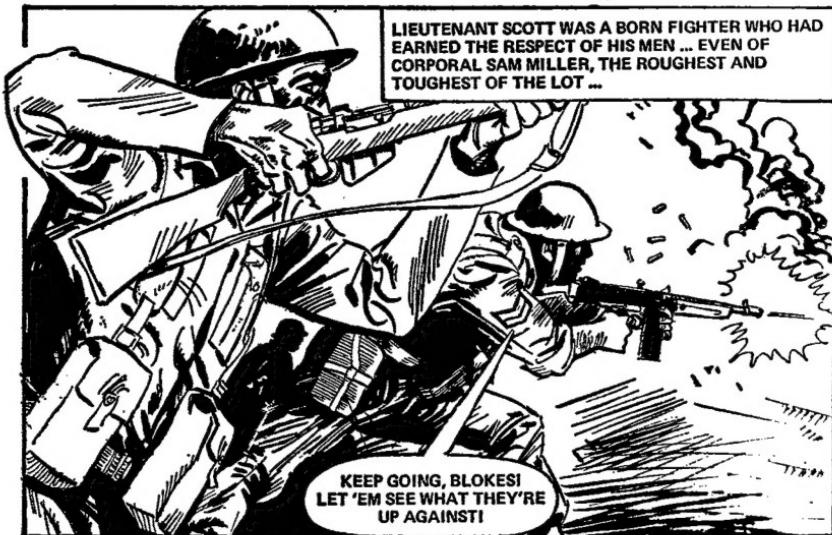


## Chapter I.

# RING OF STEEL



THE MEN OF SEVEN PLATOON HAD FOUGHT ALL THROUGH THE NORTH AFRICAN CAMPAIGN. NOW THEY WERE TAKING PART IN THE LONG HARD FIGHT UP THE LENGTH OF ITALY...



LIEUTENANT SCOTT WAS A BORN FIGHTER WHO HAD EARNED THE RESPECT OF HIS MEN ... EVEN OF CORPORAL SAM MILLER, THE ROUGHEST AND TOUGHEST OF THE LOT ...

KEEP GOING, BLOKES!  
LET 'EM SEE WHAT THEY'RE  
UP AGAINST!

FARTHER ALONG THE SLOPE EIGHT PLATOON, BOGGED DOWN UNDER THE MERCILESS ENEMY FIRE, WATCHED SEVEN PLATOON CHARGE FORWARD...

LOOK AT THAT LOT!

THAT'S SEVEN FOR YOU,  
MATE! IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN  
A FEW JERRIES TO  
STOP THEM!

IF THEY CAN  
DO IT SO CAN WE!  
COME ON!

AS SO OFTEN BEFORE IT WAS SEVEN PLATOON WHICH SET THE PACE AND DREW OTHERS ON TO FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE...

AAAGHI

LIKE OTHERS BEFORE IT, THE RIDGE WAS TAKEN AND IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED SEVEN PLATOON WAS WITHDRAWN AND HELD FOR A FEW DAYS IN RESERVE...

HEY, CORP, HOW MUCH LONGER DO WE HAVE TO SIT HERE KICKING UP OUR HEELS?

SEARCH ME, LEN. BUT IF I KNOW SCOTTIE, IT WON'T BE MUCH LONGER!

LIKE THE CORPORAL, LEN TOPHAM AND GINGER DAWSON WERE GETTING BORED WITH THE INACTIVITY, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD BEEN OUT OF ACTION FOR ONLY TWO DAYS...

I HEAR JERRY'S GOT A BATTERY OF NEBELWERFERS FARTHER UP THE LINE.

TOO RIGHT, THEY HAVE. PLAYING THE DEVIL WITH OUR BLOKES, THEY ARE, TOO...

LIEUTENANT SCOTT DROPPED DOWN BESIDE THE THREE MEN... 7



THE LIEUTENANT WENT ON TO OUTLINE HIS PLAN...

I'VE BEEN TAKING A LOOK UP FRONT AND FROM WHAT I CAN GATHER THEIR MORTARS ARE SITED BEYOND THE RIDGE ... SOMEWHERE AROUND HERE.



THE C.O.'S GIVEN US THE  
GO-AHEAD AND WE'LL BE GOING  
OUT THROUGH CAPTAIN LANGDEN'S  
POSITIONS AT ELEVEN-HUNDRED  
HOURS TONIGHT. SO PASS THE  
WORD, SERGEANT

RIGHT, SIR!

IT WAS DARK, WITH A RISING MOON,  
WHEN SEVEN PLATOON SLIPPED OUT  
THROUGH THE BRITISH LINE...

SOONER YOU THAN  
ME, MATE! JERRY'S PRETTY  
THICK ON THE GROUND  
ROUND HERE.

THERE'LL BE LESS  
OF 'EM WHEN WE'VE  
FINISHED!

WITH THEIR USUAL SELF-CONFIDENCE, SCOTT'S MEN CROSSED NO MAN'S LAND AND MOVED IN THROUGH THE ENEMY'S OUTPOSTS...



WE'RE WELL BEHIND  
THEIR LINES NOW, SIR.  
WHERE DO WE GO FROM  
HERE?

FROM WHAT I COULD  
GATHER THE MORTARS ARE  
OVER TO THE WEST ... NOT MORE  
THAN A COUPLE OF MILES.











THIS WAS NO TIME FOR FINESSE. SEVEN PLATOON  
CHARGED STRAIGHT AT THE ENEMY REINFORCEMENTS...



THE TWO GROUPS MET  
WITH RIFLE BUTTS, FISTS,  
BAYONETS...



BUT SECONDS LATER IT SEEMED THE YOUNG SOLDIER WAS RIGHT, WITH THE ENEMY ALL AROUND THEM, SEVEN PLATOON WERE IN DESPERATE TROUBLE. THEN DISASTER STRUCK...

AAGH!

THE LIEUTENANT'S BOUGHT IT!

THE SERGEANT WAS NEXT TO GO, CUT DOWN BY A WITHERING BURST OF SCHMEISSER FIRE...

DAMN YOU JERRY!



## Chapter 2.

**RECCE PATROL**

THE PLATOON HAD BEEN ALL BUT WIPE  
OUT, AND IN THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED  
WAS REFORMED AROUND THE NUCLEUS OF  
THE SURVIVORS FROM THE ILL-FATED RAID...



WE'LL BE LUCKY  
TO GET ANOTHER OFFICER  
LIKE SCOTTIE.

HOPE WE DON'T GET  
SOME STUFFED SHIRT  
FRESH OUT OF TRAINING  
SCHOOL.

MANY OF THE REPLACEMENTS WERE FRESH  
FROM TRAINING CAMP. THEY DID NOT  
REALLY UNDERSTAND THE SPECIAL AURA  
SURROUNDING SEVEN PLATOON...



CAN'T UNDERSTAND  
WHY YOU'RE SO KEEN TO  
GET BACK TO THE  
FIGHTING, CORP.

WE'VE GOT A SCORE  
TO SETTLE, THAT'S  
WHY!



TWO DAYS LATER, GINGER DAWSON HURRIED OVER FROM THE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING...

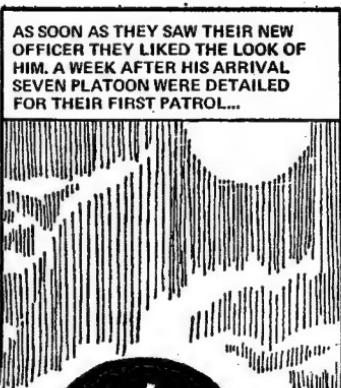
HEY, CORPI  
OUR NEW OFFICER'S  
ARRIVED! LIEUTENANT  
STEVE BARNDALE!

BARNDALE? NEVER  
HEARD OF HIM. WHAT'S  
HE DONE?

NOTHING YET. BUT  
HIS OLD MAN MADE A NAME  
FOR HIMSELF IN THE FIRST  
WAR AND HE'S GOT A  
BROTHER WITH A D.S.O.

THAT'S NOT BAD!





BUT THINGS DID NOT WORK OUT THE WAY CORPORAL MILLER AND HIS FRIENDS EXPECTED...

WHAT A SET UP!  
TWO HOURS' HIKING  
AND NOT A JERRY  
IN SIGHT!

THEY MUST HAVE  
HEARD SEVEN PLATOON  
WERE BACK. THEY'VE ALL  
GONE HOME TO BERLINI

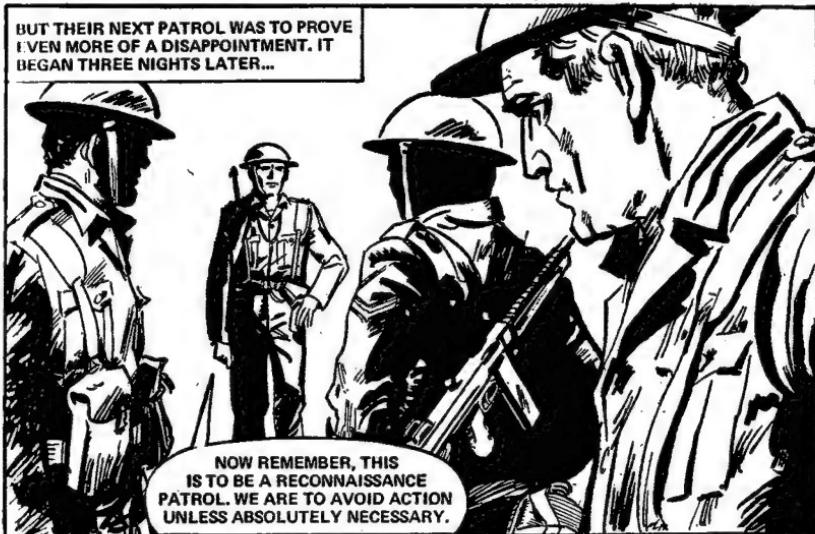


SOON THEY REACHED THE LIMIT OF THEIR PATROL AND TURNED BACK TOWARDS THEIR OWN LINES...

THEY'RE KEEPING OUT OF THE WAY AND NO MISTAKE, SERGEANT.

HAVEN'T SEEN SO MUCH AS A RABBIT, SIR.





IT WAS CORPORAL MILLER WHO SIGHTED  
THE ENEMY PATROL AN HOUR LATER...



THE GERMANS MOVED ON AND THE LIEUTENANT WAVED SEVEN PLATOON FORWARD...

LIEUTENANT BARNDALE SILENTLY LED THE MEN THROUGH THE TREES OVERLOOKING A WINDING ROAD. THEN...

RIGHT!  
LET'S GO!

LOOK AT THAT  
LOT, SERGEANT!

MARK FOURS!  
I DIDN'T KNOW  
THE JERRIES HAD  
ARMOUR UP HERE!

HOW ABOUT A FEW  
GRENADES, SARGE?

FORGET IT,  
MILLER! THIS IS A  
RECCE PATROL. OUR JOB  
IS TO OBSERVE AND REPORT  
— AND THAT'S WHAT WE'RE  
GOING TO DO!  
COME ON.

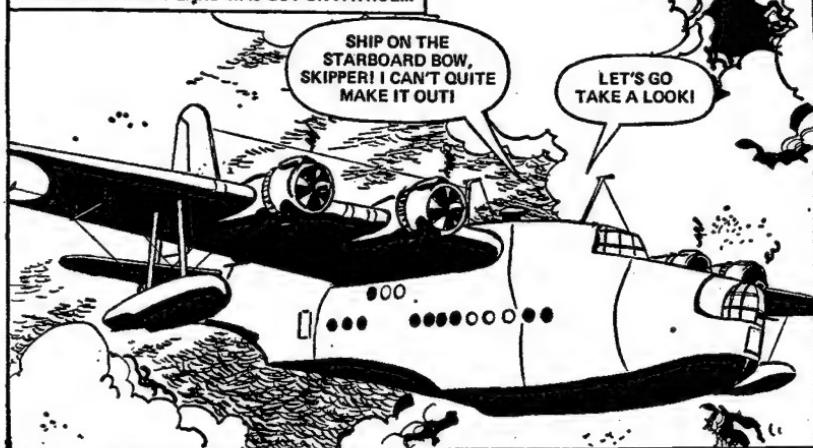




## Chapter 3.

**EXCHANGE OF FIRE**

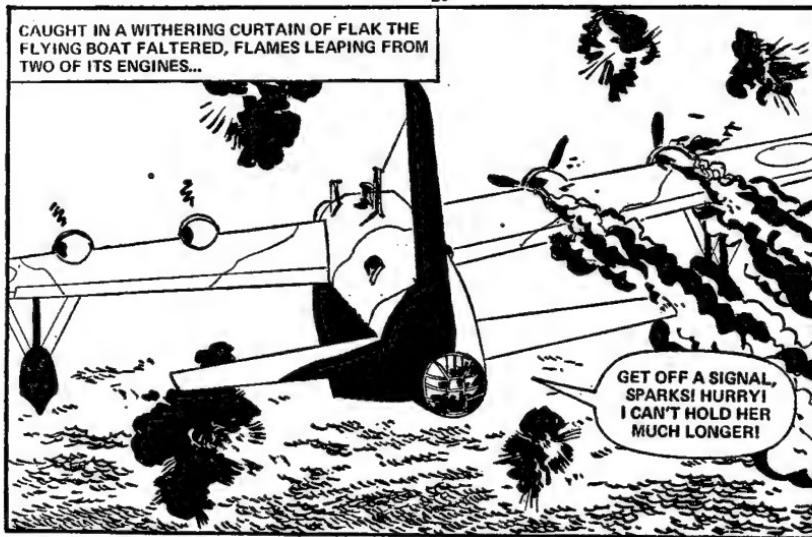
SEVERAL HUNDRED MILES AWAY FROM THAT LONELY ITALIAN HILLSIDE, AN R.A.F. COASTAL COMMAND SUNDERLAND WAS OUT ON PATROL...



IN THE GLOOM OF A DRIVING RAIN SQUALL IDENTIFICATION WAS DIFFICULT, BUT AS THE SUNDERLAND DIVED LOWER ...



CAUGHT IN A WITHERING CURTAIN OF FLAK THE FLYING BOAT FALTERED, FLAMES LEAPING FROM TWO OF ITS ENGINES...



THE RADIO MESSAGE WAS DULY RECEIVED AND THE DESTROYER H.M.S. ANTARES, AT THAT TIME ON PATROL, WAS CONTACTED...

SIGNAL FROM ADMIRALTY, SIR!

IT'S THE VON GERHARDT, NUMBER ONE! SHE'S BEEN SIGHTED NOT FIFTY MILES AWAY!

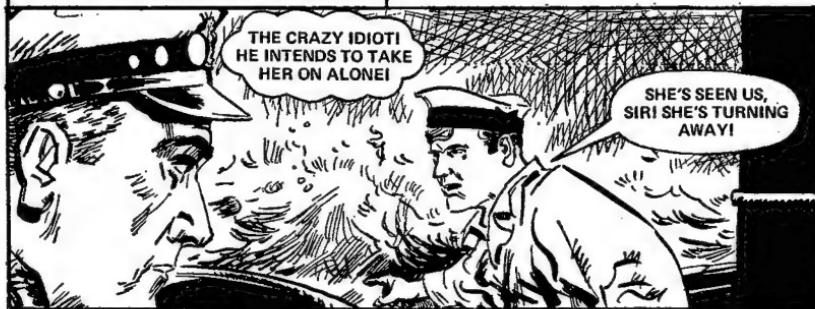


FOR LIEUTENANT COMMANDER  
KEITH BARNDALE, D.S.O., SKIPPER  
OF THE ANTARES, THIS WAS A  
CHANCE IN A MILLION...

FULL AHEAD BOTH!  
STEER ONE-TWO-FIVE!

DUSK WAS ALREADY CLOSING IN WHEN A  
LOOKOUT FINALLY SIGHTED THEIR QUARRY...

IT'S THE VON  
GERHARDT, ALL  
RIGHT, SIR!



BARNDALE WATCHED THE ENEMY SHIP CLOSELY THROUGH HIS GLASSES...

SHE'S HEADING FOR THE FOG BANK, NUMBER ONE! WE'LL SOON PUT A STOP TO THAT LITTLE GAME. STARBOARD TEN!



THE ANTARES ALTERED COURSE ON A HEADING WHICH WOULD CUT OFF THE VON GERHARDT'S ESCAPE...

THE ENGLANDER WILL HEAD US OFF, HERR KAPITAN!

THEN HER CAPTAIN IS A FOOL. THEY WILL SOON BE IN RANGE. BRING THE FORWARD TURRETS TO BEAR!



THE FIRST SALVO FELL SHORT AS THE BRITISH DESTROYER VANISHED IN THE FOG...

PORT TWENTY! THEY'VE LOST US, NUMBER ONE! NOW'S OUR CHANCE!



IT WAS DARK AND RAINING WHEN THE ANTARES CAME OUT OF THE FOG...

WHERE IS SHE, SIR?

ON THE PORT BEAM!  
I CAN SEE HER BOW WAVE!



THE FAINT GLEAM OF WATER FROTHING  
PAST THE VON GERHARDT'S BOW WAS ALL  
THAT COULD BE SEEN, BUT IT WAS ENOUGH...

HARD-A-PORT, HELMSMAN!  
STAND BY TORPEDO TUBES!



YOU'RE NOT PLANNING  
TO ATTACK HER, SIR? SHE  
COULD BLOW US OUT OF THE  
WATER BEFORE WE'RE EVEN IN  
RANGE. IT WOULD BE SUICIDE!

MAYBE ... MAYBE NOT,  
NUMBER ONE. WE'LL BE HARD  
TO SEE IN THIS LOT.



CALMLY, KEITH HELD HIS COURSE, KNOWING  
HE WOULD HAVE ONLY ONE CHANCE...

HOW MUCH LONGER  
CAN OUR LUCK HOLD?

RANGE SIX  
THOUSAND!



SECONDS LATER AN ALERT LOOKOUT ABOARD  
THE VON GERHARDT SPOTTED THE SLEEK SHAPE...

ENEMY DESTROYER ON  
THE STARBOARD QUARTER!



KEITH BARNDALE'S DAREDEVIL MANOEUVRE HAD ALMOST COME OFF. BUT AS THE ANTARES TURNED TO DELIVER HER ATTACK THE VON GERHARDT'S GUNS SWUNG INTO LINE AND OPENED FIRE...



EVEN AS THE ANTARES TURNED AWAY A SECOND BROADSIDE STRADDLED HER WITH KILLING EFFECT...





THE ANTARES WENT TO THE BOTTOM SECONDS LATER – TAKING WITH HER HER CAPTAIN AND MOST OF THE CREW...



## Chapter 4.

**KILLING GROUND**



CORPORAL MILLER HEARD THE ORDER IN DISGUST...

ON YOUR FEET, MILLER! WE'RE PULLING BACK!



WHAT FOR, SARGE? WE FOUGHT HARD FOR THIS HILL...

SERGEANT CARTER HAD NO TIME TO ARGUE. THE OTHER PLATOONS WERE ALREADY PULLING OUT...

DON'T ARGUE, CORPORAL! GET GOING — THAT'S AN ORDER!



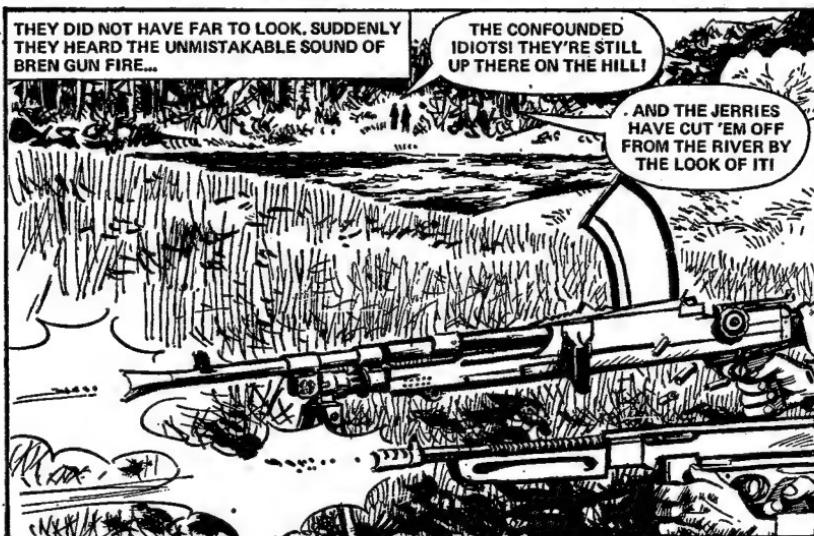
III. ENTIRE COMPANY WITHDREW IN GOOD ORDER, BUT AS STEVE CHECKED ON SEVEN PLATOON HALF-AN-HOUR LATER...



THEY DID NOT HAVE FAR TO LOOK. SUDDENLY THEY HEARD THE UNMISTAKABLE SOUND OF BREW GUN FIRE...

THE CONFOUNDED IDIOTS! THEY'RE STILL UP THERE ON THE HILL!

AND THE JERRIES HAVE CUT 'EM OFF FROM THE RIVER BY THE LOOK OF IT!



STEVE STUDIED THE FAR BANK FOR A FEW MINUTES. THEN...

THE GERMANS HAVEN'T MOVED INTO THAT GULLY ON THE RIGHT, SERGEANT. THOSE THREE IDIOTS COULD GET AWAY DOWN THAT.

YES, SIR. IF THEY KNEW ABOUT IT.

AND WITHOUT A RADIO THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN TELL THEM. THERE'S NOTHING ELSE FOR IT - I'LL TAKE TWO MEN WITH ME AND TRY AND GET THEM OUT.

IT'LL BE RISKY, SIR. YOU'LL BE PUTTING YOUR HEAD ON THE BLOCK FOR THOSE THREE IDIOTS.

STEVE GAVE A GRIM LAUGH...



STEVE ASKED FOR, AND GOT TWO VOLUNTEERS  
TO GO WITH HIM AND PREPARED TO RE-CROSS  
THE RIVER...



THE SERGEANT WAITED UNTIL THE  
THREE MEN ENTERED THE WATER...

OKAY, YOU LOT!  
LET'S SEE SOME ACTION!  
GET THAT BREW WORKING,  
THOMPSON! KEEP JERRY'S  
HEAD DOWN!

SURE THING,  
SARGE!

SMOKE WAS BILLOWING FROM THE FAR  
BANK AS STEVE AND HIS MEN INCHED  
CAUTIOUSLY ACROSS THE RIVER...

WATCH YOUR  
FOOTING, LADS.

THANKS TO THE SERGEANT'S DIVERSION,  
THEY REACHED THE FAR BANK WITHOUT  
BEING SEEN...



THE GERMAN GUNNERS WERE TOO BUSY WATCHING  
THE BILLOWING SMOKE TO NOTICE THE THREE MEN  
RUNNING FOR THE GULLY BELOW THEM...





SUDDENLY, HE LEAPED TO HIS FEET AND TRIGGERED THE TOMMY GUN...

AAGH!



THE SPANDAU CREW HAD NO CHANCE TO FIGHT...

GRENADES,  
NOBBY! QUICK!

RIGHT, SIR!



ALERTED BY THE SUDDEN BURST OF FIRING  
OTHER GERMANS WERE MOVING FORWARD...

TURN THAT GUN  
ROUND, GREENI WE'LL  
LET 'EM HAVE A TASTE OF  
THEIR OWN MEDICINE!



CRUCHING BEHIND THE SPANDAU, STEVE  
TRIGGERED A LONG, SAVAGE BURST...

GET MILLER AND  
THE OTHER TWO WHILE  
I COVER YOU!

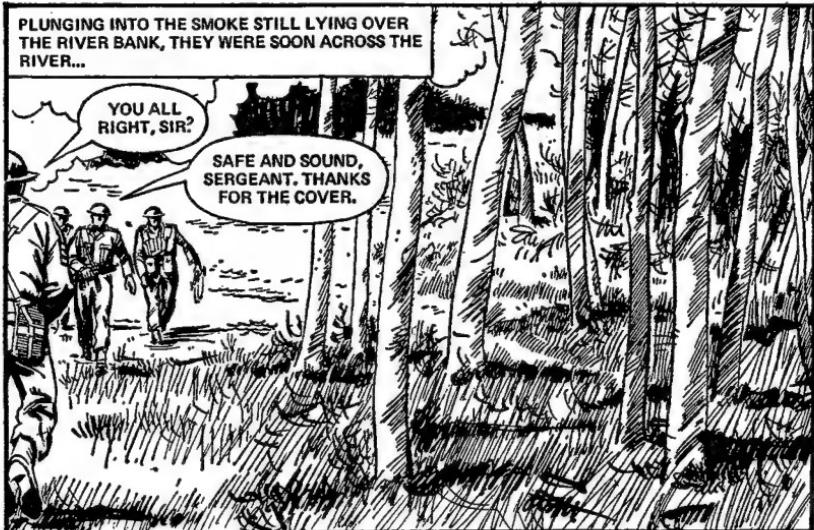
RIGHT, SIR!



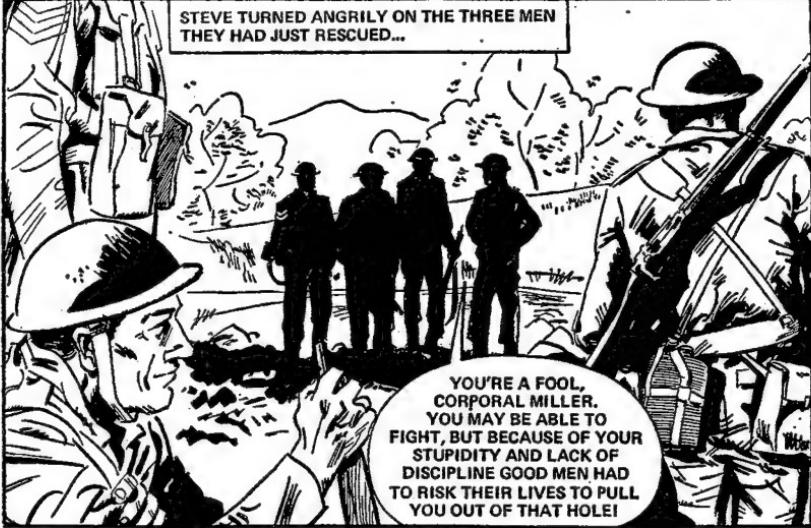
THE GERMANS WERE STOPPED BY THAT VICIOUS BLAST AND STEVE THREW A GRENADE UNDER THE GUN AND RAN AFTER THE OTHERS...



PLUNGING INTO THE SMOKE STILL LYING OVER THE RIVER BANK, THEY WERE SOON ACROSS THE RIVER...



STEVE TURNED ANGRILY ON THE THREE MEN  
THEY HAD JUST RESCUED...



YOU'RE A FOOL,  
CORPORAL MILLER.  
YOU MAY BE ABLE TO  
FIGHT, BUT BECAUSE OF YOUR  
STUPIDITY AND LACK OF  
DISCIPLINE GOOD MEN HAD  
TO RISK THEIR LIVES TO PULL  
YOU OUT OF THAT HOLE!



UNDERSTAND THIS,  
I WON'T HAVE MEN'S LIVES  
THROWN AWAY. FROM NOW ON  
YOU WILL OBEY ORDERS OR I'LL  
HAVE THE THREE OF YOU BEHIND  
BARS FOR THE REST OF THE  
WAR. GOT IT?

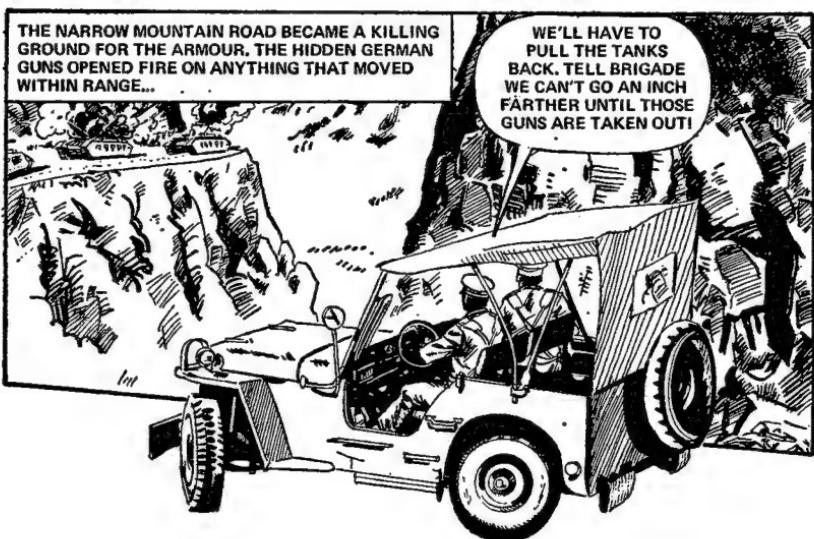
YES, SIR!

TWO DAYS LATER, SEVEN PLATOON AND THE REST OF THE COMPANY RE-CROSSED THE RIVER, THIS TIME WITH ARMoured SUPPORT. THE GERMANS FELL BACK AND THE ADVANCE ROLLED ON IN TO THE CASTELITO PASS. THEN...



THE NARROW MOUNTAIN ROAD BECAME A KILLING GROUND FOR THE ARMOUR. THE HIDDEN GERMAN GUNS OPENED FIRE ON ANYTHING THAT MOVED WITHIN RANGE...

WE'LL HAVE TO PULL THE TANKS BACK. TELL BRIGADE WE CAN'T GO AN INCH FARTHER UNTIL THOSE GUNS ARE TAKEN OUT!







THE SERGEANT SHRUGGED.  
HE KNEW AS LITTLE AS ANY-  
ONE. THEN STEVE WALKED  
UP....

THAT'S ENOUGH,  
SERGEANT! THEY'RE  
AS GOOD AS THEY'LL  
EVER BE.

VERY GOOD,  
SIR!

THANKFULLY, THE MEN OF SEVEN PLATOON  
STOOD DOWN.

TELL THE MEN TO  
GET SOME REST OVER  
THE NEXT FEW HOURS,  
SERGEANT.

CAN YOU TELL  
ME WHAT IT'S ALL  
ABOUT, SIR?

WE'RE GOING AFTER  
THE EIGHTY-EIGHTS IN  
CASTELITO PASS, SERGEANT.  
EVEN CORPORAL MILLER  
SHOULD FIND THAT  
SUFFICIENTLY EXCITING,  
DON'T YOU THINK?



**Chapter 5.****SPIKE THE GUNS**

AT EXACTLY 0100 HOURS THAT NIGHT,  
THE MEN OF SEVEN PLATOON CROSSED  
THROUGH THE GERMAN LINES...



I RECKON OUR  
LIEUTENANT'S  
LEARNING, GINGER!  
GETTING US A REAL  
JOB FOR A CHANGE.

MAYBE HE'S  
NOT SUCH A BAD  
BLOKE, AFTER  
ALL!

SHUT UP, YOU  
TWO! D'YOU WANT  
THE JERRIES TO KNOW  
WE'RE HERE?



THE PLAN WAS FOR THE PLATOON TO WORK ITS WAY ALONG THE RIDGE ABOVE THE GUNS, THEN TO USE ROPES TO DROP DOWN ON THEM FROM ABOVE.

THIS RAIN'S GOING TO MAKE THE ROPEWORK TRICKY, SIR.

IT CUTS BOTH WAYS, SERGEANT. IT WILL ALSO MAKE IT HARDER FOR JERRY TO HEAR US.

FOR THE NEXT TWO HOURS THEY CAUTIOUSLY INCHED THEIR WAY UP THE BACKBONE OF THE RIDGE...

THERE'S THE PERIMETER WIRE!

RIGHT, MILLER,  
AND TOPHAM, YOU TAKE THE  
SENTRIES ON THE RIGHT! GREEN  
AND DAWSON, COME WITH ME!

ONE BY ONE THE PATROLLING GERMAN SENTRIES WERE SILENCED...



TWENTY YARDS BEYOND THE PERIMETER WIRE  
THEY FOUND THE CLIFF EDGE OVERLOOKING  
THE ENEMY GUNS...

ALL CLEAR,  
SIR!

GOOD WORK! NOW  
GET THOSE ROPES  
FIXEDI.



SO FAR ALL HAD GONE ACCORDING TO PLAN. BUT IT WAS TOO GOOD TO LAST. SUDDENLY THEY HEARD VOICES AND DROPPED INTO COVER...



SEVEN PLATOON'S LUCK RAN OUT SECONDS LATER WHEN ONE OF THE ENEMY SOLDIERS CAUGHT HIS FOOT IN ONE OF THEropes...

ACH! WHAT IS THIS?

THEY'VE SEEN THE ROPE!

GET THEM!



AS STEVE AND CORPORAL MILLER OPENED FIRE THE ENEMY TRIED DESPERATELY TO REACH COVER – BUT THERE WAS NO ESCAPE...



ALL HOPE OF SURPRISE HAD GONE. STEVE KNEW THAT OTHER GERMANS WOULD SOON COME TO INVESTIGATE THE BURST OF GUNFIRE...



GET GOING...  
SERGEANT!  
WE'LL COVER YOU  
FROM HERE.

AS SERGEANT CARTER AND HIS PARTY WENT OVER THE EDGE, STEVE SPREAD HIS MEN OUT ALONG THE CLIFF TOP...



FIND YOURSELVES  
GOOD COVER, LADS. WE'VE  
GOT TO HOLD THEM!



THE GERMANS HAD COURAGE, BUT THERE WERE  
NOT ENOUGH OF THEM. FIRING FROM WELL—  
CONCEALED POSITIONS THE BRITISH STOPPED  
THEM IN THEIR TRACKS...



FIFTY FEET BELOW THE CLIFF TOP, CORPORAL MILLER FOUND HIMSELF SWINGING OVER THE BARREL OF AN ENEMY EIGHTY-EIGHT. HIS REACTION WAS SWIFT AND DEADLY...



THE GRENADES EXPLODED WITH FEARFUL RESULTS IN THE CONFINED SPACE OF THE CAVE...

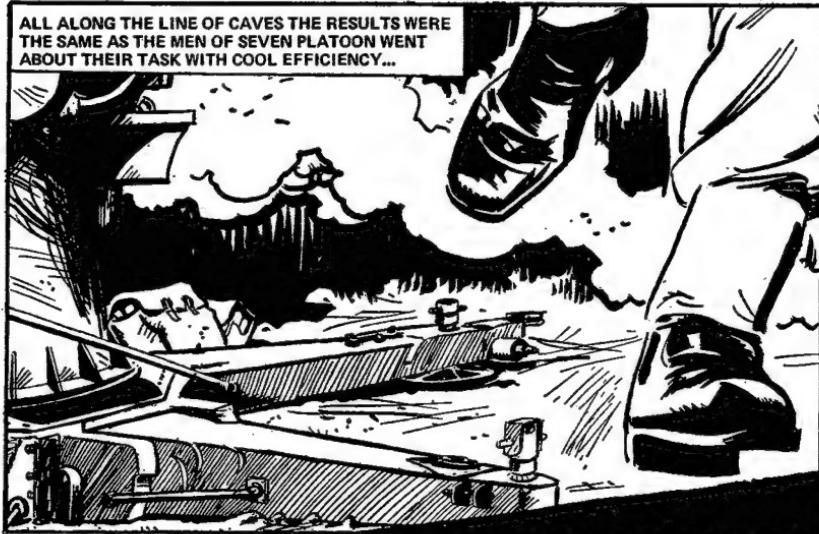


AS THE SMOKE CLEARED, MILLER SWUNG HIMSELF INTO THE CAVE AND BEGAN PLACING HIS SATCHEL CHARGES...



MINUTES FROM  
NOW, THIS'LL BE A CHUNK  
OF USELESS METAL...

ALL ALONG THE LINE OF CAVES THE RESULTS WERE  
THE SAME AS THE MEN OF SEVEN PLATOON WENT  
ABOUT THEIR TASK WITH COOL EFFICIENCY...



ONE BY ONE THE DEMOLITION PARTY CONTINUED THEIR DESCENT TO THE BOTTOM OF THE RIDGE BELOW THE CAVES...



ON THE CLIFF-TOP, STEVE CHECKED HIS WATCH. IT WAS TIME TO MOVE...





STEVE WAS THE LAST TO LEAVE: HE WAS  
STILL FIRING AS HE LOWERED HIMSELF  
OVER THE EDGE...



STEVE SLID DOWN THE ROPE UNDER  
A HAIL OF COVERING FIRE...



HE WAS ONLY FEET FROM THE GROUND WHEN  
THE CHARGES BLEW, THE BLAST BOWLING HIM  
OVER...



MILLER RAN FORWARD AND HELPED HIM TO HIS FEET. ABOVE THEM THE ECHOES OF THE EXPLOSIONS WERE DYING AWAY...

THAT'S PUT PAID TO THEIR LITTLE GAME, I RECKON. NOW WE CAN ALL PUSH ON AND HAVE ANOTHER CRACK AT JERRY!

MILLER, YOU'RE IMPOSSIBLE! YOU'RE ONLY HAPPY WHEN THE LEAD'S FLYING AROUND YOUR EARS. STILL, YOU'RE RIGHT. I RECKON WE KEPT SEVEN PLATOON'S REPUTATION INTACT WITH THIS NIGHT'S WORK!



ALSO ON SALE NOW...

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